



What is the Certified South Carolina program?

It is a new, exciting cooperative effort among producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture to brand and promote South Carolina grown and processed agricultural products.

The Goal

The ultimate goal of our branding and marketing effort is to help revitalize our state's rural economy by creating an emotional preference for all South Carolina agricultural products.

The Scope of Our Campaign

This is not a short-lived campaign, since we are advocating a fundamental shift in the public's lifestyle buying decisions. Media promotions and bold displays of *Certified South Carolina* products in supermarkets and other retail venues will help increase sales and create a brand preference for quality *Certified South Carolina* products.

In its initial stages, the program will focus its efforts in-state and later expand into neighboring states and beyond.



Rise To The Occasion

Rise and shine, it's your turn to act. Please, make the commitment and, most importantly, complete an application to participate in the *Certified South Carolina* program. We look forward to working together with you to make this program a success and to reinvigorate our state's rural economies.

Hugh E. Weathers

Information and Applications

For more information on the *Certified South Carolina* program and an application to participate, contact:

Ansley M. Rast,
Certified South Carolina Program
arast@scda.sc.gov

South Carolina Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 11280
1200 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29211
803-734-2200



Grow South Carolina.
Nothing's Fresher.
Nothing's Finer.

Introducing the
Certified South Carolina Program



South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Our program theme:



This theme evokes an emotional response as it stirs a sense of pride in South Carolina quality. First, “Buy South Carolina” is a to-the-point call to action. Next, “Nothing’s Fresher. Nothing’s Finer” makes a strong quality statement.

Farmer and processor participation assures availability

Without fresh, quality produce on the shelves, there is nothing to promote. The participation of our state’s farmers and processors in the *Certified South Carolina* program is key to its success.

How can you participate?

As a grower or a processor, you can:

- * Apply for membership
- * Make a long-term commitment to the *Certified South Carolina* program
- * Use *Certified South Carolina* materials when promoting your company and products
- * Place identifying labels and stickers on products and packaging

What Products Qualify?



Grown Any first quality products, grown in South Carolina, that meet the US #1 Quality Grade Standard, or higher U.S. Grade Standards, whichever is the accepted USDA industry grade standard for that commodity. The logo shall not be used on secondary labels or cull products.



Product Any value added products, manufactured food products and other agricultural products that may be further sorted, graded, blended, processed and packaged in South Carolina. Specialty Agricultural food businesses located in South Carolina are also eligible. All products must meet the accepted USDA or FDA industry standards for the product—whichever is appropriate.

Quality Assurance Standards

To maintain the credibility and effectiveness of the *Certified South Carolina* program, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture will administer and monitor the program. The Department reserves the right to deny program participation to any one or to any product which is not deemed to meet the quality standards of the *Certified South Carolina* program.

Retail Support

Retailers and wholesalers from across the state have been contacted and are on board and eager to participate. Due to the backing of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, many agricultural associations have also made a commitment to ensure that the message gets out.

Will The Public Buy It?

Yes. Marketing research has repeatedly affirmed that locally produced products are perceived as fresher and more wholesome than foods grown for long-haul shipping. Recent consumer trends indicate a growing demand for fresher, healthier foods. This is good news for local farmers, processors and the rural communities they support.

Studies further show that consumers are willing to support local and state businesses through a “sense of pride.” The South Carolina Department of Agriculture feels strongly that the consumers will select *Certified South Carolina* produce and products when given the choice.

With your participation and the overall commitment of our agricultural community, South Carolina consumers will have a choice and they will indeed buy *Certified South Carolina*. After all, “Nothing’s Fresher. Nothing’s Finer.”